

04aa09-Letter-to-Thyatira

by "Sister Anne" | Jun 1, 2017 | 04aa Mary Unveils the Apocalypse | 0 comments



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Good evening everyone!

Greetings to our audio and YouTube listeners!

Tonight, we're going to speak of the crux of the Apocalypse, the horizontal bar of the great cross that pervades the entire message of this book. The Letter to the Church of Thyatira is the very crux of the Apocalypse. It's been nine or ten weeks since our introductory overview which explained the chart of seven sevens, making a table of 49 squares with a big cross through the center. Let's take a moment to review that. In that first conference I gave some reasons why I believe that Mary's locutions to Father Steven Gobbi, back in the 1980s and 1990s, were given in circumstances that lent authenticity. You can look at my YouTube for all that. But ultimately, we'll never know if a prophecy is true until it comes true. But Mary definitely got me started on this difficult book because She kept telling this simple, unscholarly Italian priest that She wanted everyone to study the Apocalypse because we were being called to live through it. Over the years, She explained some of the symbols, but only some. So, I kept studying commentaries, Catholic and Protestant. One day it really struck me that most of these learned scholars spent their time arguing with each other over one issue, whether to divide the book into 4 sets of 7s, or 5 sets of sevens. All agreed that there were Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets, Seven Signs and Seven Plagues, but they had long and boring debates about whether the Seven Letters were an integral part of the Revelation or whether the letters were only an admonition to the churches to read and heed the Revelation.

Suddenly the light dawned for me! We were all missing the forest for the trees! Sevens! Trumpets! This book is about a great Year of Jubilee. Trumpets are blown at the end of seven Sabbatical years. Of the three great feasts in the Mosaic Law, Jesus fulfilled the Passover feast by his death and Resurrection when He "passed over" from earth to heaven. The Feast of Weeks was fulfilled by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost the Greek name for the feast meaning fifty days because it's celebrated 7 weeks, that is 49 days plus one after Passover. We don't have to review the details. But what about the third and greatest feast, Tabernacles? The feast of feasts! This feast should correspond to the Father from whom all goodness comes. The old Feast of Tabernacles celebrates the arrival and occupation of the Promised Land. For seven days the Israelites lived in little makeshift tents or booths to relive the time when they were sojourning in the wilderness. In the old Feast of Tabernacles, seventy bulls are offered. The rabbis saw this number as corresponding to the Genesis Table of seventy nations of the whole world. Isaiah and other prophets foresaw a time when all the nations of the world would acclaim the true God. The Book of Revelation celebrates the defeat of evil in the world and the worship of the true God on the whole earth by many nations! When the Jews are journeying to Jerusalem they sing the Hallel psalms, Hallelujah. Allel-Yahweh! Where do we hear Hallelujah in the NT? Only in the Book of Revelation:

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem . . . and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. . . . By its light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it . . . they shall bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

Rev 21 passim

If that hunch was correct there has to be seven groups of seven in the Book, not just four or five. So, I opened the text to begin hunting for two more groups of seven. That search only took five minutes. The last group of five ends in Chapter

16 with the seven bowls of plagues. But the Apocalypse has another six more chapters to go. And what are these final chapters about? A wicked harlot and a beautiful bride-city. The harlot receives seven judgments and the bride-city receives seven adornments. These are not explicitly numbered and Mary did not explicitly discuss them, but when I built a table for the seven groups of sevens, I saw something extraordinary! Mary had focused her explanations to the “Seven Signs.” This is the fourth group of Sevens, so on a table it forms the central column.

The first group of sevens is the “Seven Letters.” If the fourth Church is central to the Book, then the Apocalypse is stamped with the Cross. Tonight, we’re going to see that Thyatira is a very important part of the Apocalypse. Let’s begin:

And to the Angel of the Church in Thyatira write: Thus, says the Son of God, He who has eyes as a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. I know your works, your charity, your faith, your service, your patience, and your last works more numerous than the first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who, calling herself a prophetess, teaches and leads astray my servants to commit impurity and to eat idol-offerings. I gave her time that she should repent and she wills not to repent of her impurity.

Behold, I cast her upon a bed, and the companions of her adultery into great tribulations, unless they shall repent of her works; and her children I will strike with death. And all the churches shall know that I am He who searches reins and hearts; and I will give to each of you according to your works. But to you I say, to the rest in Thyatira—whosoever does not hold this doctrine, such as have not (in their phrase), known the deep things of Satan—I cast not upon you any other burden. Only hold fast what you have, until I come. As for him that conquers and that keeps my works till the end, I will give him power over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen vessels are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received from my Father; and I will give him the morning star. He that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches

Rev 2:18-29

Unlike the rest of the seven cities, history and archeology have provided quite sparse information on Thyatira. Historians and ancient writers generally rarely mention it. There are ruins. The city definitely existed, but the numerous inscriptions which have been discovered and published tell us only the bare minimum. The community of Christians must have been only a small portion of the population at this time because a renegade Christian sect called the *Alogi* (meaning against the Logos) arose about 175 A.D.; (that’s not too many years after the Apocalypse was written). This heretic group denied the Holy Spirit and also the Logos teaching of the Gospel of Saint John and his Apocalypse. One of their strongest proofs for denying the authenticity of the Apocalypse was that there were so few Christians at Thyatira, that they said it could hardly be called a Church.

Luke, in the Book of Acts, tells us about a devout woman named Lydia. She was originally from Thyatira, but Saint Paul converted her at Philippi. Was she only there on a business trip? Did she return to Thyatira and convert some friends and relatives? We have no names of Christians and no real information until a couple of centuries later when the population becomes almost *entirely* Christian.

A few coins from Thyatira provide some clues about its deities. It’s the most remote of the churches in the seven-letter circuit, fifty miles southeast of Pergamum. In the Middle Ages the city became almost entirely Moslem and the Turks changed the name of Thyatira to Ak-Hissar (White Fortress). As for the meaning of the original name, like most everything else about the ancient city, that too, is a bit uncertain. The etymology suggests something like: “odor of affliction.”

One thing we definitely know about ancient Thyatira, and the modern Ak-Hissar, is that it’s always been a busy trade center because of its strategic location at the intersection of important roads. It was one of the cities where money was first used.

Most historians believe that money was invented by nearby Lydians in the 7th century B.C., and Thyatira a very important trade center soon began stamping their own coins. However, Thyatira’s location was also its biggest problem because it was on an open plain on a route that everybody wanted to control. Thyatira was captured successively by the Seleucid Empire, the Attalid dynasty, and by Mithridates VI of Pontus, then the Romans gained control about 80 B.C. And this provides light on the problems in the Church. It’s multicultural. It’s a melting pot. There are many deities. There’s a lot of syncretism among the pagans, and this syncretism naturally has a strong influence on the minds of the Christians. Syncretism and tolerance are what Jesus is warning the bishop about. As we proceed we’ll see why this letter and this Church is dead-center, the major theme in the Apocalypse that’s going on around us right now. Let’s take it line by line.

And to the Angel of the Church in **Thyatira** write: “Thus says the Son of God, He who has eyes as a flame of fire, and whose feet are like bright bronze.” The word for burnished or fine brass is *chalcolibanos* and it occurs only here in Scripture. Bronze was a very hard alloyed metal used for weapons. Under proper treatment it would have a brilliant polished gleam catching the light like gold.

Colin Hemer points out that the great English archaeologist Sir William Ramsay suggested that [the text in the Apocalypse] referred to a local trade name for an alloy with a special quality that had been produced by the local guild of coppersmiths . . . The guild of coppersmiths is attested in an inscription. The frequent coin-types of [the deities] Hephaestus and Athene, wearing helmets, reflect the city’s association both with war and crafts. And the same industry is carried on there today [1990s]. In one section of the old town the metal workers are grouped together: their workshops and furnaces are seen behind the shop-fronts where their products are sold. The localized crafts of the modern town reinforce the impression of continuity of life in this place.

The ABC of Biblical Archeology, the Bible and Christ, by Dr. Clifford Wilson (1995)

Dr. Wilson goes on to speculate:

The Thyatiran Christians are perhaps being assured [by Jesus] that their [divine] leader is clothed in an armor that flashes like the metal from their own furnaces. He knows their guilds, knows their circumstances, recognizes their problems—but also reminds them that He is the [true] Son of God. He is more powerful than their most powerful opponent, and He will not allow them to be tested beyond what they are able to bear.

The ABC of Biblical Archeology, the Bible and Christ, by Dr. Clifford Wilson (1995)

The Thyatirans have a coin with their deity:

The divine smith, Hephaestus, dressed as a workman . . . seated at an anvil (represented by a small pillar), holding in his left hand a pair of forceps, and giving the finishing blow with his hammer to a helmet, for which the goddess of war, Athene, is holding out her hand. Considering that a guild of bronze [copper] smiths is mentioned at Thyatira, we cannot doubt that this coin commemorates the peculiar importance for the welfare of Thyatira of the bronze-workers’ handicraft; and we must infer that bronze work was carried to a high state of perfection in the city.

The ABC of Biblical Archeology, the Bible and Christ, by Dr. Clifford Wilson (1995)

Maybe it’s true that the particular Greek term “*chalkolibanos*” is unique in the Bible because it’s a special technique used by the metalsmiths of Thyatira, but “burnished bronze” is certainly an expression from the Hebrew Bible. The First Book of Kings and Second Book of Chronicles go into great detail about the metals used in Solomon’s temple. The enormous pair of cherubim, fifteen feet tall and each with a thirty-foot wingspread, were carved of wood and overlaid with gold. The walls of the Temple were covered with gold and diamonds and a variety of gems, and even the nails were gold, and the floor was gold, and the Ark was gold, and the altar of incense was gold, and the great lampstand was one piece of seventy pounds of beaten gold. But everything connected with burnt sacrifices had to be of a stronger metal. The phrase “burnished bronze” appears often for the pots, lavers, the shovels and the great outdoor bronze altar itself. This specially tempered, extra strong metal was used for the great bronze sea which was mounted on twelve bronze oxen for the ritual cleansing of the priests. It required so much bronze that they didn’t attempt to figure out its weight. The Babylonians had to work hard to break it up before they could carry off the metal to Babylon.

But the bronze item that I believe best corresponds to the one *whose feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace* [Rev 1:15] were the two great pillars that Solomon placed at the front of the Temple, inside the great court which held the great bronze altar. Because the Bible notes that these pillars were hollow, most scholars tend to the opinion that these were two freestanding pillars, not a structural support for a porch roof. I was surprised to discover that over the centuries, Christian and rabbinical commentaries have proposed a variety of meanings for these two enormous bronze pillars but there is no consensus. They rarely agree with each other. It’s all a guess. I never found one commentator that

agreed with me. It was a long time before it even occurred to me to consult any commentaries, because I assumed the meaning was obvious. They were pillars! They were free-standing. They were at the front. The burnished bronze would have caught the sunlight and giving them the appearance of columns of fire. Doesn't that suggest the pillar of fire from the Exodus? At the Temple the pillar could finally stop wandering in the desert and park itself in the promised land. Does it not remind one also of the fiery cherubim stationed at the entrance of paradise? Alright, it's true, there was only one pillar in the desert, but the Hebrew idiom double-portion is well-known. Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Firstborn sons received the double portion. In Israel they had the right to erect altars anywhere they wished to offer sacrifices on behalf of their families, but this Temple in Jerusalem was the double portion, having the altar of altars. The south-side, right-hand, pillar was named "Jachin" meaning "Yah establishes." The "Boaz" pillar means "strength." They seem to stand there as a double witness of shining, fiery witness of the blazing Spirit of God that this Temple holds the primacy of worship.

In Saint John's vision, the legs of Jesus were hidden by his long white robe. Jesus is clothed like a high Priest Only his feet are visible. When Daniel beheld the Angel Gabriel on the banks of the Tigris (that is, near Babylon), Daniel said that the angel was dressed in linen (that is, like a priest or Levite) and

His face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the noise of a multitude.

Dan 10:6

The Angel had been sent in answer to Daniel's prayer to understand the meaning of the seventy-week captivity in Babylon. Gabriel went on to speak of the end times:

At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time . . . But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end . . . "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?" The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven; and I heard him swear by him who lives for ever that it would be for a time, two times, and half a time . . . Many shall purify themselves, and make themselves white, and be refined; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but those who are wise shall understand. . . . And from the time that the continual burnt offering is taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits and comes to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

cf Dan 12:1-12

You might recognize that all these expressions, spoken to Daniel by the priestly-angel whose legs are of burnished bronze, are found in the Apocalypse, but we haven't discussed them in detail yet and I'm going to pass by them right now. Ezekiel also had a vision of angels in Babylon, four cherubim who escorted the Ark to and from the Temple.

Their legs were straight . . . as were the soles of their feet . . . and they sparkled like burnished bronze

Ezk 1:5-7

When Daniel saw this manlike angel with a "face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches" Daniel said

the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves . . . and no strength was left in me . . . I fell . . . with my face to the ground . . . [until] . . . a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees

cf Dan 10:6-10

All the commentaries, Protestant and Catholic are unanimous that the Church of Thyatira had problems with standing firm. It's a compromising Church. Jesus appears tough. To other Churches He is holding stars, or keys or some symbol, but with Thyatira He is scary. His burning eyes can see right through them. He comes to threaten them with all the

anathemas of a High Priest He is standing on the bronze legs of firm doctrine. The burnished bronze and priestly linen garment tell a message that He expects right worship. But it's also the Good Shepherd. Jesus begins gently, and He knows there are worthy Christians in this wayward flock.

4th Letter to Thyatira

Thus, says the Son of God he who has eyes as a flame of fire, and whose feet are like bright bronze. I know your works, your charity, your faith, your service your patience, and your last works more numerous than the first.

Rev 2:18

I won't repeat the whole section from my previous conference where I introduced the reasons why it's possible to see these ancient cities as corresponding to regions in the modern world, but very quickly:

The 1st Church: Ephesus—Rome with the Cardinals and the Curia

The 2nd Church: Smyrna—Poor Churches, Africa and South America

The 3rd Church: Pergamum—Communist Dominated Churches, especially Russia and China

The 5th Church: Sardis—Wealthy Churches, that is, North America

The 6th Church: Philadelphia—Marginalized Christians, this is a term much-used by the Blessed Mother. We'll see that these Christians form the symbolic 144,000 selected from every tribe and nation, that is from all regional churches

The 7th Church: Laodicea—Tepid Churches, Europe

The 4th Church, Thyatira, represents multi-cultural Churches, namely India, Asia. Jesus is praising these Christians with a long list of virtues. He begins with works of charity. We don't have a lot of details about Thyatira but the citizens were definitely industrious people, hard workers,

Perhaps the one salient thing about Thyatira is the unusual prominence of trade-guilds in the few available sources. There are references to unions of clothiers, bakers, tanners, potters, linen-workers, wool-merchants, slave-traders, coppersmiths and dyers . . . Various inscriptions indicate that unions had an important place in the industrial and social life of Thyatira . . . The guilds were in vogue even before Roman times, and their importance was enhanced by their establishment so long ago.

"Buried History," by Hemer, C.J. (September 1975), p. 114

The Thyatirans were also charitable.

The guilds were devoted to good works. Corporately the members subscribed to erect honorific inscriptions and sometimes ostentatious buildings and amenities for communal welfare. Think of India. In this country with a caste system and thousands of beggars, it's the Christians who do the most for the poor. Even the government admits that. Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charities are world-famous, but India has a long history of hundreds of religious congregations, and thousands of consecrated men and women in schools, leprosariums, hospitals and orphanages. Christian charity has been the most impressive witness in India and Asia, and inspired many converts.

Jesus praises their faith and their patience.

How hard it is to be Faithful in a place where you are the minority, where you are surrounded by a completely pagan culture where every aspect of public life is permeated by another religion. Even in public hotels, Hindu priests enter in the morning to perform rituals in honor of the guests who are regarded as gods. Almost everyone and everything is a divinity in this religion. Symbols abound in architecture, in music, in clothing, in the schools. Christians have to live and breathe this atmosphere which is so unlike places like Canada where the culture is so Catholic that the streets are named for saints. It's hard for Americans to really imagine what it's like to be always on the fringes, always in the minority, always having to scrutinize and resist certain influences. It would definitely try one's patience! How Jesus looks on these Christians with a very special love and gratitude for their patience and fidelity. American Christians are total wimps compared to Christians in India and Asia!

Jezebel

But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who, calling herself a prophetess, teaches and leads astray my servants to commit impurity and to eat idol-offerings. I gave her time that she should repent and she will not to repent of her impurity. Behold, I cast her upon a bed, and the companions of her adultery into great tribulations, unless they shall repent of her works; and her children I will strike with death.

Rev 2:20-23

Jezebel was so bad that her name entered the English dictionary as a metaphor for shamelessness. What were the Christians doing that Jesus described as “going along with Jezebel.” We have to go back to the Book of Kings and the days of Elijah, who was sent to prophesy when Ahab was King and he had taken the foreign Jezebel as his wife. Hebrew King Ahab wanted to syncretize the religion of the land with the religion of Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of nearby Tyre and Sidon. Actually, Jezebel is the anglicized of Yeza-baal. These people worshiped Baal. “Yeza Baal” was taken from a phrase in the liturgy that invokes this God.

The character of the Baal cult has been much illuminated by the discovery of the Canaanite mythological tablets of Ugarit.

El the Bull was head of the pantheon, venerable but not an effective ruler.

Dagon, his son is the grain god, a minor figure who is the father of the great Aleyan Baal.

Aleyan Baal is the powerful god who rides across the sky, standing upright on El the bull.

The bull, was a symbol of strength, sometimes of war, and always fertility because oxen in an agrarian culture were necessary for life. Aleyan Baal rides standing, brandishing thunderbolts, because he controlled the rain.

When the Israelites and Aaron made a golden bull-calf in the desert, and bowed down before it, calling its name Yahweh, this may have already been an early sign of the syncretism to come. The bull was a conveyance of gods, Yahweh rides on an ark. Israelites could make an image of the throne (ark, bull) but they didn't dare make an image of God. Worshiping Baal was much more fun than keeping the Ten Commandments. We'll see why in a minute.

The title Baal was applied to several gods. It meant “Lord” in the sense of “one who owns us.” In Hebrew, the title Adonai also meant Lord, in the sense of “one who rules us.” Hebrews often prayed to Yahweh as Lord, so it was an easy jump from Adonai to Baal.

This “Rider of the Clouds” is also called, Hadad Baal, that is Mighty Baal. As the violent storm-god Hadad Baal rules the weather and is thus the giver of fertility of crops and livestock Elijah calls down a drought, which will be a direct challenge to Mighty Baal's power.

Like the Hindus, the Canaanites have many myths about their gods. In a prominent story Baal is killed by the monsters spawned by his wife-goddess Asherah. Anath, another one of Baal goddess wives, attacks and kills Baal's enemy Mot (who is death personified). Another myth says that Mot killed Baal. Whatever. The adversaries are always dying and then rising, to mimic the autumn/spring cycle. The religion goes nowhere. It is purely cyclic. Death is never ultimately conquered.

Perhaps all this seems harmless enough and not too different from the other religions in the surrounding nations of Israel like Egypt which had its pantheon of deities. But the Canaanite Baal religion is the only one that merits the name “nature religion.” In the other religions there were distinctions between the common person and the divinity. Pharaoh might be hailed as divine but the common person was not divine, but only a humble suppliant of the gods. On the contrary, in the religion of Jezebel, God was not distinct from nature. Everybody could participate in the “great life forces” and become part of the deity. Baalism posed a very special danger to Israel because it reduced Yahweh to the level of a natural force (energy) and made religion nothing more than a means of securing the goods of nature.

The myth of the death and resurrection of Baal represented the annual cycle with its death of vegetation and the return of the seasons of fertility, and this was acted out with the ritual sex ceremonies in the high places with lots of trees, “sacred groves.” These orgies purported to integrate the worshipers with the cycle and draw them into a deep participation of divine forces that maintain life.

Because everything was a cycle, life itself tended to be cyclic too, and not too important. All these sacred ceremonies in the trees with probably a variety of partners led to the conception of unwanted and inconvenient children. No problem, just offer them back to the gods as a burnt offering, hence the cruel ritual of burning infants alive. Other religions sometimes engaged in human sacrifice but the slain were usually war captives. The religion of Jezebel is such a horrible

distortion of nature that the Canaanites have no qualm about killing their own children. And although moral standards in other religions weren't always very high, no religion sank so low in sexual license as did Baal worship which made it the central rite. This is why the incident of worship of the Baal of Peor with Balaam was a sin that Yahweh punished severely. Balaam was mentioned in another letter of the Apocalypse so we spoke of this incident in a recent conference.

Some people have the idea that the Israelites were barbaric, and had no qualms about killing other people as they entered occupied territory to claim it as their Promised Land. That's a serious misconception. God had doomed the Canaanites because they were sinning against nature. Sins against nature were regarded as sins against the earth. Yahweh regarded it as a sacred duty for Israel to cleanse the land by wiping out seven groups of people:

I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites . . . the Girgashites

cf Ex 33:2; Dt 7:1

Leviticus 18:20-24 lists four main sins of those who practice Baalism:

vs 20: **adultery**

vs 21: **the killing of children**

vs 22: **homosexuality**, specifically singled out as abomination, but in a moment, God will call all of these "abominations"

vs 23: **bestiality**

Do not defile yourselves by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am casting out before you defiled themselves; and the land became defiled, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. . . . for all of these abominations the men of the land did, who were before you, so that the land became defiled; lest the land vomit you out, when you defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you . . . I am Yahweh your God.

For whoever shall do any of these abominations, the persons that do them shall be cut off from among their people. So, keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs which were practiced before you, and never to defile yourselves by them: I am Yahweh your God

Leviticus 18:24-28

These groups were under the ban (literally anathema). The Israelites couldn't even keep the booty. Everything these people had touched was loathsome to God. But the Israelites had to treat other nations and their religions with respect. They were not allowed to attack them unless they were attacked. The Assyrians were cruel murderers and plunderers but Yahweh finds this nothing compared to these four sins which hinged on treating the flesh as an end in itself and, furthermore, using other bodies (human or animal) as an end for one's own pleasure. The exact opposite concept is the Mystical Body where no body uses anybody but each member is concerned for the other and strives for unity in love.

But the Israelites never quite got rid of the Baal worshipers during the great leadership of Joshua. The people always felt tempted by these seductive people. After Joshua died, God said he was done helping them. God would use the presence of these foreigners as a test:

You have not obeyed my command. What is this you have done? So now I say, I will not drive them out before you; but they shall become adversaries to you, and their gods shall be a snare to you

Judges 1:2-4

After the Israelites suffered defeat after defeat, the prophet Samuel finally persuaded them

“If you are returning to Yahweh with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your heart to Yahweh, and serve Him only, and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” So, Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served Yahweh only.

1Sm 7:3-4

Another feature of Baal worship was the way it was open to all races. It was a very international religion.

There is evidence to show that in Thyatira there was a great amalgamation of races. Latin inscriptions are frequent, indicating a considerable influx of immigrants from the other nations on the Italian peninsula; and there are Greek inscriptions with Latin words mixed in. Latin and Greek names, too, are found mixed together in personal names—such as Titus Antonius Alfenus Arignotus, and Julia Severina Stratonice. Amalgamation of different races, in pagan nations, always went together with a syncretism of different religions, every relation of life having its religious sanction.

cf Smith's Bible Dictionary

Life for a Christian in Thyatira wasn't easy.

A Christian convert who resolved to make a clean break with his pagan past might find himself obliged to withdraw [from the guilds]. Membership involved participation in idolatry and the immorality which attended the feasts. But it was also a necessary requirement for practicing a trade in such a place as Thyatira”

“Buried History,” by Hemer, C.J. (September 1975), p. 114

As we have seen, Baalism focused on the body. When the Greeks entered Israel at the time of Alexander, many Jews were already compromised with syncretism so it wasn't hard to apostatize and play the games at the gymnasiums which were always in honor of various deities. Sports and exercise can easily turn into a form of idolatry.

Thyatira had the typical Roman gymnasium . . . The social and educational life of the city centered around the gymnasium, and to reject some of the associated practices meant ostracism. A commitment to Christianity involved a very real spiritual “cross-taking.” The gymnasium was accepted as the major civic center, the school, the “club” and center for leisure (including athletic contests) as well as being the site for emperor worship. Christians did indeed face problems! . . . Although the gymnasium has not been recovered at Thyatira, the record from coins makes it clear that the Christians there would have faced the usual problems faced by their brethren in other cities controlled by the Romans. Even civic duties involved possible compromise. If you were wealthy you were expected to share the duties of gymnasiarchai—the officials superintending the gymnasia—and also as agonothetai, helping to run the athletic contests—at times involving nakedness for male competitors. This meant personal attendance and even financial commitment for body oil, prizes and refreshments.

The ABC of Biblical Archeology, the Bible and Christ, by Dr. Clifford Wilson, 1995

The religion of Baal mingled with Christianity, as you must have noticed by now, would look a lot like the New Age movement which has many names, but everyone knows that its roots are deeply entwined with Hinduism. When did this eastern religion begin to mesh with western religion?

Yoga

Before he left India in 1893, Swami Vivekananda, “in America is the place, the people, the opportunity for everything new,” And his guru, Sri Ramakrishna, had taught that the world's religions “are but various phases of one eternal religion” and that spiritual essence could be transmitted from one person to another. Swami Vivekananda set about to bring that transmission to our shores. His first speech was at the World

Parliament of Religions in Chicago. . . In 1920 Paramahansa Yogananda came to address a conference of religious liberals in Boston. He had been sent by his guru, the ageless Babaji, to “spread the message of Kriya yoga to the West.” . . . Then in 1924 the United States immigration service imposed a quota on Indian immigration, making it necessary for Westerners to travel to the East to seek teachings. One of the earliest of these was Theos Bernard, who returned from India in 1947 and published “Hatha Yoga: The Report of a Personal Experience.” It was a major sourcebook for yoga in the 1950s and is still read. That same year, 1947, Indra Devi opened a yoga studio in Hollywood. . . But the person who introduced more Americans to yoga than any other in those days was Richard Hittleman, who in 1950 returned from studies in India to teach yoga in New York. He not only sold millions of copies of his books and pioneered yoga on television in 1961, but he influenced how yoga has been taught ever since. Although he was a student of the sage Ramana Maharshi and very much a “spiritual” yogi, he presented a non-religious yoga for the American mainstream, with an emphasis on its physical benefits. He hoped students would then be motivated to learn yoga philosophy and meditation

<http://www.yogajournal.com/article/history-of-yoga/yogas-trip-america/> Learn how yoga found a home in America from these yoga pioneer by Holly Hammond (Aug. 29, 2007)

<http://people.howstuffworks.com/beatles-yoga.htm>

There were more individuals and more books but eastern ideas became mainstream in 1967 when the Beatles traveled to India and came back with new music and a method of meditation which they first called “Spiritual Regeneration Movement” but later sanitized of its overt religiosity as Transcendental Meditation: the Science of Creative Intelligence.

Most of us have only a dim recollection of the Beatles, but if you google Yoga and Beatles you’ll come up with a world of amazing information. The Hippie generation recognized similarities in yoga’s altered states of consciousness with those obtained by drugs. Music and dance played an important role in the relaxation techniques. Several of the Beatles wrote new songs, inspired by their instruction under swamis and gurus. George Harrison wrote “My Sweet Lord.” The Beatles used Hindi texts in their songs and created new mantras by interchanging names of eastern deities like Krishna and Rama with Christian words like Hallelujah, and Lord God.

Reincarnation became a positive spiritual option. Cremation became popular. The merging of Christianity and the east had begun a slow and serpentine course.

[In] 1980, few people had heard of the New Age Movement. [In 1991] nearly everyone had. Related movements or labels are: Human Potential Movement, Modernism, New Thought, Globalism, and the Aquarian Conspiracy. Parts of it include Mind Control classes, the Holistic Health Movement, Transcendental Meditation, Humanistic Psychology, Positive Confession, Feminist Spirituality, Positive Mental Attitude, the New Physics, and numerous political organizations, as well as various esoteric, environmental and animal rights movements.

Unicorn in the Sanctuary by Randy England (1991) p.2

Jesus said those who rejected Jezebel’s syncretism:

But to you I say, to the rest in Thyatira—whosoever does not hold this doctrine, such as have not (in their phrase), “known the deep things of Satan”—I cast not upon you any other burden.

Rev 2:24

The merging of religions requires a new form of prayer to a new kind of God, leading to “deep things”:

New Age meditation includes a variety of related techniques. These are often very similar to the practices of the Hindu and other Eastern religions. Frequently the same practices are . . . grouped under the heading of occultism. The term is one of pride to the occultists, because it means “hidden.” These occult or “hidden” powers of the “ancient wisdom” have supposedly been preserved by the “ascended masters” throughout

vast ages of time. It is only in the past hundred years or so that many of these “occultists” have been allowed (by their masters) to write and speak of the ancient wisdom.

Yoga, born in the East, is also widely practiced in the West. Movie stars do it. Athletes and artists do it. Priests, nuns, and even an American archbishop do it. The Hindi word “yoga” comes from the two Sanskrit words, “yo” and “ga.” “Yoga” means unity. [Yoke is from an Indo-European root]. The goal of Yoga is to unite [yoke] man with the pantheistic god of Hinduism . . . This union requires a heightened state of consciousness or awareness, during which the yogi realizes his oneness with god or the “higher self.” It is oneness with god. It is being god. As such, from the Hindu perspective it is salvation: No sin. No guilt. No savior.

Unicorn in the Sanctuary by Randy England (1991) p.36

Today 35 million American are into yoga. There are many paths to yoga: one can focus on a deity or focus on wisdom or focus on good deeds. Each yoga has a physical aspect, and a spiritual aspect. Classical Hinduism and yoga are synonymous, asserting that this universe is the manifestation of Brama, the infinite, all-embracing deity which is consciousness. This can be equated as “the Force” so popular in movies of the Star Wars genre.

If you visit India you will see images of snakes absolutely everywhere, far more so than in China. The snake is the image of the spine and the spine is the path of life’s energy. The spirit of Yoga is the spirit of the serpent. The energy is like a coiled serpent at the base of the spine. Yoga exercises are serpentine, a series of movements designed to connect the flow. Every movement is bowing down to the god of the serpent “the rising energy.” Many of the poses imitate animals and nature gods,

especially sun-god. Hindus see almost everything as god. They recognize 330 million gods. In the Biblical world view: God is personal, and outside creation, God forgiveness through Jesus’ atoning sacrifice. In the Hindu world view: God is everywhere, humanity is divinity, a change of consciousness “saves” man by taking him up into divinity.

A famous priest in India has a large website. Let me quote him directly:

Yoga in philosophy and practice is incompatible with Christianity. As a Catholic Christian born in a traditional Catholic family in Kerala, India, but one who lived amidst the Hindus; and now as a Catholic religious priest and charismatic preacher in 60 countries in all continents, I have something to say about the bad effects of Yoga on Christian spirituality and life. I know there is a growing interest in Yoga all over the world, even among Christians—and this interest is extended to other esoteric and new age practices like Reiki, reincarnation, acupressure, acupuncture, *pranic* healing, reflexology, etc. which are methods against which the Vatican has cautioned and warned in her document “Jesus Christ bearer of the water of life.”

For some, Yoga is a means of relaxation and easing of tension, and for others is a form of exercise promoting fitness and health, and for a few is a means of healing of sicknesses. There is much confusion in the mind of the average Catholic—lay and cleric—because Yoga as promoted among Catholics is neither entirely a health discipline nor entirely a spiritual discipline, but sometimes one, sometimes the other, and often a mixture of both. But *in fact*, Yoga is primarily a spiritual discipline and I know that even priests and nuns in seminaries and novitiates promote Yoga as a help to meditation and prayer. It is sad that nowadays, many Catholics are losing trust in the great spiritualities and mysticisms of prayer and discipline handed over to them by great saints like Ignatius of Loyola, Francis of Assisi, Francis of Sales, Saint Theresa of Avila, etc. and are now going after the Eastern spiritualities and mysticisms coming from Hinduism and Buddhism. It is in this regard that a sincere Christian should inquire into Yoga’s compatibility with the Christian spirituality and the wisdom of incorporating its techniques into Christian prayer and meditation.

What is Yoga? The word Yoga means “union,” the goal of Yoga is to unite one’s transitory (temporary) self, “JIVA” with the infinite “BRAHMAN,” the Hindu concept of God. This God is not a personal God, but an impersonal spiritual substance which is one with nature and cosmos. Brahman is an impersonal divine substance that “pervades, envelopes and underlies everything.” Yoga has its roots in the Hindu Upanishads . . . saying that . . .the Divine dwells within each one of us through, his microcosmic representative, the

individual self, called Jiva. . . . In A.D. 150, the yogi Patanjali explained the eight ways that leads the Yoga practices from ignorance to enlightenment –the eight ways are like a staircase –They are self-control (yama), religious observance (niyama), postures (asana), breathing exercises (pranayama), sense control (pratyahara), concentration (dharana), deep contemplation (dhyana), enlightenment (samadhi). It is interesting to note, here, that postures and breathing-exercises, often considered to be the whole of Yoga in the West, are steps 3 and 4 towards union with Brahman! Yoga is not only an elaborate system of physical exercises, it is a spiritual discipline, purporting to lead the soul to samadhi, total union with the divine being. Samadhi is the state in which the natural and the divine become one, man and god become one without any difference.

Such a view is radically contrary to Christianity which clearly distinguishes between Creator and creature, God and man. In Christianity, God is the “Other” and never the self. It is sad that some promoters of Yoga, Reiki and other disciplines and meditations, had misquoted some isolated Bible quotations to substantiate their arguments such as, “you are the temple of God,” “the living water flows from you,” “you will be in me and I will be in you,” “it is no longer I that lives but Christ lives in me,” etc. without understanding the context and the meaning of those words in the Bible. There are even people who portray Jesus as a yogi as we can see nowadays such pictures of Jesus in convent-chapels and presbyteries -Jesus presented in yogi postures of meditation!

To call Jesus “a yogi” is to deny his intrinsic divinity, holiness and perfection and suggest that He had a fallen nature subject to ignorance and illusion (Maya), that He needed to be liberated from the human condition through the exercise and discipline of Yoga. Yoga is incompatible with the Christian Spirituality because it is pantheistic . . . The center of Christian faith is the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, three persons in one God-Head, the perfect model of loving relationship. Christianity is all about relationships, with God and among men, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself” [Mt 22: 37-39].

In Hinduism, good and evil, like pain and pleasure are illusory and therefore unreal. . . . Hinduism says “good and evil are one and the same.” In Christianity the vexing problem of sin as an offence against the holiness of God is inseparable from our Faith, because sin is the reason why we need a Savior. The Incarnation, the Life, the Passion, the Death and the Resurrection of Jesus are for us means for salvation, that is to set us free from sin and its consequences. We cannot ignore this fundamental difference in order to absorb Yoga and other Eastern meditation techniques into Christian Spirituality. The practice of Yoga is pagan at best, and occult at worst. **This is the religion of AntiChrist** and for the first time in history it is being widely practiced throughout the western world and America. It is ridiculous that even yogi masters, wearing a Cross or a Christian symbol, are able to deceive people saying that Yoga has nothing to do with Hinduism and it is only accepting the other cultures. Some have masked Yoga with Christian gestures and call it “Christian Yoga.” . . . It is really accepting another religion. . .

The desire to become God is the first and second sin in the history of creation as chronologically recorded in the Bible [First of all Satan] “You said in your heart, I will scale the heavens, above the stars of God I will set up my throne; I will take my seat on the mount of Assembly, in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds, I will be like the Most High” [Isa 14: 13-14]. [Then Eve] The serpent said to the woman, “You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God who knows what is good and what is bad” [Gn 3: 4-5]. The philosophy and practice of Yoga are based on the belief that man and God are one. It teaches one to focus on oneself instead of the One True God. It encourages its participants to seek the answers to life’s problems and questions within their own mind and conscience instead of finding solutions in the Word of God through the Holy Spirit as it is in Christianity. It definitely leaves one open to deception from God’s enemy, who searches for victims whom he can take away from God and the Church [1Pt 5: 8].

For last eight years, I have been preaching the Word of God in European countries, which once were the cradles of Christianity, producing evangelists and missionaries, martyrs and saints. Now can we call Europe Christian anymore? Is it not true that Europe has erased all its Christian concepts and values from lives? Why is Europe ashamed to say that it has Christian roots? Where are the moral values and ethics practiced by Europeans from down the centuries and handed over to other countries and cultures by the bold proclamation of the Gospel of Christ? From the fruits we shall know the tree! I believe that these doubts and confusions, apostasy and infidelism, religious coldness and indifference came to Europe ever since the Eastern mysticisms and meditations, esoteric and New Age practices were introduced in the West.

In my charismatic retreats, the majority of the participants come with various moral, spiritual, mental and physical problems in order to be liberated and healed and to have a new life through the power of the Holy Spirit. With all sincerity of heart, I will say, 80 to 90% of the participants had been into Yoga, Reiki, reincarnation, etc. and in these Eastern religious practices they had lost faith in Jesus Christ and the Church. In Croatia, Bosnia, Germany, Austria and Italy, I had clear instances where individuals who were possessed with the powers of darkness cried out “I am Reiki,” “I am Yoga,” identifying themselves to these concepts as persons while I was conducting prayers of healing for them. Later, I had to pray over them by the prayer of deliverance to liberate them from the evil possessions.

There are some people who say, “there is nothing wrong in having the practices of these, it is enough not to believe the philosophies behind.” The promoters of Yoga, Reiki, etc., themselves very clearly state, that the philosophy and practice are inseparable. So, a Christian cannot, in any way, accept the philosophy and practice of Yoga because Christianity and Yoga are mutually exclusive viewpoints. Christianity sees man’s primary problem as sin, a failure to conform to both the character and standards of a morally perfect God. Man is alienated from God and he is in need of reconciliation. The solution is Jesus Christ, “the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” Through Jesus’ death on the Cross, God reconciled the world to Himself. He, now calls man to freely receive all the benefits of his salvation through faith in Christ alone. Unlike Yoga, Christianity views salvation as a free gift, it can only be received and never be earned or attained by one’s own effort or works. Today what is needed in Europe and elsewhere is the powerful preaching of the message of Christ coming from the Bible and interpreted by the Church in order to remove the doubts and confusions wildly spread among the Christian in the West and to bring them to the Way, the Truth and Life: Jesus Christ. Only Truth can set us free.

“Yoga in philosophy and practice is incompatible with Christianity” by Father James Manjackal, MSFS
<http://www.jmanjackal.net/eng/engyoga.htm>

This dynamic priest is a member of a large religious congregation in India. They are working hard to have instruct their people. Father Manjackal said it. I say it too: *Yoga or Hinduism is the religion of the AntiChrist*. This is the central crossbeam of our times, the center of the battle with the serpent dragon and the beasts of the Apocalypse. Although people today like to say the mark of the beast is the computer chip embedded in your hand, consider the little red dot that the Hindus wear. The area between the eyes is the known as the “third eye.” This is the sixth chakra (wheel), the seat of concentrated wisdom where yoga tries to drive the force up through the spine. The other chakras start at the base of the spine and run upwards with psychic energy. Yoga awakens the “cobra” which uncoils and rises up the spine. Artists portray advanced persons as surrounded by uncoiled snakes. Many who practice yoga experience revelations of “higher truths” in “dreams.” They don’t understand that demons are speaking to them. The main technique of yoga is to quiet the mind, to reach the place of no thought, where you “transcend thinking.” This is opening wide the door to demons. Satan hates reason, rational thinking. Jesus Christ is the Truth, the Logos. Satan wants us in darkness, ignorance, confusion and ultimately dependence on him. Yoga is represented by the python. It’s not a poisonous snake. It kills you in a sneaky way. It quietly wraps around you, then squeezes hard and swallows you whole. Get far away from yoga!

But like the people of Thyatira. We’re surrounded by a pagan occult culture. Target offers 4235 yoga products. Walmart offers 990 products. Amazon offers 18,700 yoga books. Yoga is a \$27 billion industry. YMCA/YWCA and thousands of clubs offer yoga as part of physical education, wellness techniques, physical fitness exercises. It’s popular. It’s all about

self. It's marketed as a self-realization program. Best of all, you don't have to think. There is no guilt, no sin, no concept of good or evil. It's the ultimate religion of tolerance.

The way of yoga is the way of death. That's actually what the Hindus call it. Reincarnation is regarded as a hopeless cycle of imprisonment. The aim of Hinduism is liberation from the human condition, to escape into the force, into a feeling of nothingness. It's antisocial, anti-humanity. It separates the body from the spirit. Best to cremate that. Throw it in the Ganges. It doesn't go to Hindu heaven. Hindu heaven is nothing, nothing and nothing.

And this brings us to a new form of Christianity which is being called the "Emergent Church." Pastors are telling themselves or being told by their congregations that they have to change in order to become relevant. It must be all about experience over reason, subjectivity over objectivity, spirituality over religion, images over words, outward over inward, feelings over truth. The emerging church rejects any standard methodology for doing anything. Some groups go only a little way into this, and remain biblically sound. Most groups, however, embrace post-modernist thinking, which eventually leads to a very liberal, loose translation of the Bible. This, in turn, lends to liberal doctrine and theology.

Truth becomes relative. If the Bible is not our source for absolute truth, and personal experience is allowed to define and interpret what truth actually is, the person and mission of Jesus Christ is rendered meaningless. There is also anti-biblical form of ecumenism. Unity among people coming from different religious backgrounds and diversity in the expression of corporate worship are strong focuses of the emergent church movement. Being ecumenical means in this environment simply compromise not dialog in a path to agreeing on revealed truth.

But there is no compromise with truth. You either end up with truth or non-truth. Christianity or something dark.

Thyatira was on the crossroads. Its duty was first of all to be a garrison-city to keep the wrong people from crossing over. The military spirit of the soldier citizens had to be encouraged to the utmost. You hear that in Jesus promises:

But to you I say, [that is] to the rest in Thyatira . . . hold fast what you have, until I come. As for him that conquers and that keeps my works till the end, I will give him power over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen vessels are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received from my Father; and I will give him the morning star. He that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches.

Rev 2:18-29

Jesus Christ is the dawn from on high, the Orient, the Rising Sun. To give us this morning star is to hand us a new day. The Great Day of the Lord, the Feast of Feasts, when He will be Lord of all nations. Let us hold fast to what we've received of the truth. And let us share it with others, shining light on them, to deliver them from the darkness of many errors.